**What is claimed is:**

1. An article management system wherein a noncontact electronic tag storing tag data is attached to an article to be managed in a management area, the system comprising:

a passage radio communication unit disposed in a passage section leading to the management area, the passage radio communication unit communicating with the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article passing through the passage section, and executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact electronic tag.

2. The article management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the tag access processing includes:

interrogation communication processing of setting a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one piece of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at the same response timing and received by the passage radio communication unit collides with another.

3. The article management system as claimed in claim 2, wherein a limitation condition is set for terminating repetition of the repetitive processing regardless of whether or not collision avoidance is accomplished.

4. The article management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the noncontact electronic tag stores inhibition detection-possible data indicating permission or inhibition of passage through the passage section, and wherein the passage radio communication unit executes the tag access processing when the passage radio communication unit detects the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article whose inhibition detection-possible data indicates inhibition of passage through the passage section.

5. The article management system as claimed claim 1, further comprising:

a user radio electronic medium capable of identifying each user and storing user data, the user radio electronic medium communicating with the passage radio communication unit,

wherein the passage radio communication unit is set to receive the user data from the user radio electronic medium.

6. The article management system as claimed in claim 1,

wherein the tag data is article-unique data capable of identifying each article, and includes at least one of unique ID given for each noncontact electronic tag and article data.

7. The article management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the tag access processing includes at least one of access processing of transmitting an interrogation signal to the noncontact electronic tag and receiving a response signal from the noncontact electronic tag, multiple tag access processing of transmitting an interrogation signal to a plurality of noncontact electronic tags and receiving a response signal while reliably circumventing a collision, and simple tag access processing of transmitting an interrogation signal to a plurality of noncontact electronic tags and receiving a response signal while circumventing a collision to some extent.

8. A noncontact electronic tag storing inhibition detection-possible data indicating permission or inhibition of passage through the passage section as an application family identifier.

9. An article management method using a noncontact electronic tag storing tag data which is attached to an article to be managed in a management area, the method comprising:

communicating with the noncontact electronic tag attached

to the article passing through a passage section leading to the management area; and

executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact electronic tag.

10. The article management method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the tag access processing includes:

interrogation communication processing of setting a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one piece of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at the same response timing and received by the passage radio communication unit collides with another.

11. The article management method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the tag access processing is executed for the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article whose passage is inhibited.

12. The article management method as claimed claim 9, further comprising:

communicating with a user radio electronic medium capable of identifying each user and storing user data to receive the user data from the user radio electronic medium.

13. A computer-readable medium storing instructions for operating an article management system wherein a noncontact electronic tag storing tag data is attached to an article to be managed in a management area, said instructions comprising;

communicating with the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article passing through a passage section leading to the management area; and

executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact electronic tag.

14. The computer-readable medium storing instructions for operating an article management system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the tag access processing includes:

interrogation communication processing of setting a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one piece of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at the same response timing and received by the passage radio communication unit collides with another.

15. The computer-readable medium storing instructions for operating an article management system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the tag access processing is executed for the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article whose passage is inhibited.

16. The computer-readable medium storing instructions for operating an article management system as claimed in claim 13, said instruction further comprising:

communicating with a user radio electronic medium capable of identifying each user for user and storing user data to receive the user data from the user radio electronic medium.